

Dec 14, 2011

ACADEMIC COST CONTAINMENT

Introduction:

Academics are a priority at ASU. Tuition is a central revenue source for the university. The number of students enrolled, student semester credit hours earned and degrees conferred continue to increase at ASU. The complement of faculty and adjuncts necessary to support that increase has remained stable. External accrediting agencies have noted programs at ASU are doing a lot with few resources and caution “leanness” at the expense of academic quality. Investments in the academic enterprise are necessary.

Charge: To consider other actions to further contain costs in the academic arena. Quantify effectiveness of cost efforts and publish the outcomes.

Definitions:

Cost Cutting---reducing unit costs of production

Cost Containment----reducing growth in spending

Cost Management---finding ways to systematically reduce spending

Academic Categories:

Adjunct Faculty---attached-note bottom of table---full time faculty numbers stable over 3 yr period and adjunct faculty over 5 yr period despite enrollment gains.

On Line Learning—attached—top part of table---% of classroom instruction has continued to decline over 5 yr period concomitant with gradual increase of combined web/online, web assisted and CVN receiving (from 7.8% to 16.3%).

Degree/course offerings—Academic viability analysis has occurred for all degrees offered at ASU as required by the state. Programs were consolidated and others were eliminated or embedded within an existing degree program. Two degree programs currently do not meet the state’s academic viability standard but the number of current students in the pipeline suggests one of them will be successful in meeting state standards. Academic Affairs is tracking those academic programs that are marginally viable and should the number of graduates continue to decline, those degree programs may be discontinued due to their inability to meet academic viability standards. Program consolidation, elimination of duplicative courses and discontinuation of programs to date have not resulted in real dollar savings but some efficiencies have been demonstrated with program management and operations. Also considering programming with other universities for graduate degree offerings (consortium programs). Exploring courses/degrees which can be offered using the large scale distance format as appropriate. The 120 credit hr mandate for BS degrees will result in student savings but cost the university in revenue generation.

Support centers in academic units—A portion of the academic budget is used to fund centers/programs that do not generate academic credit. Examples include, the Office of Research and Technology Transfer (ORTT), Delta Center for Economic Development, AR Heritage SITES, Library, Interactive Teaching and Technology Center, Academic Support Center for Athletes, Institutional Research and Planning, Outcomes Assessment, Registrar, Advising, Graduate School, Fowler Center, ASU Farm and Continuing Education and Community Outreach. In the last fiscal year, ORTT has moved from 100% state

funding to 100% support through the recovery of externally funded indirect (administrative) costs. All other units have not been able to generate sufficient revenue to cover their expenditures from external sources. All units are held accountable for meeting revenue standards (if applicable) with noted performance improvement but do not have the ability at this time to be wholly self sustaining.

Classrooms—Classrooms have been remodeled for increased seating capacity. Centralized scheduling is occurring for large classroom spaces to maximize efficiencies. There is an attempt to minimize IT costs by installing only necessary teaching/learning items in the classroom. We are creating efficient deployment of teaching resources with technology enabled course re-design.

Faculty---As senior/tenured faculty retire, hire assistant/associate professors as replacements. Promote early retirement option to acquire funds essential for internal reallocation. Faculty teaching loads are currently 12 semester hrs undergraduate and 9-12 semester hours graduate.

Internships—Clinical travel costs are high. Now exploring iPad applications (Facetime) to perform student intern supervision.

Other---Paper and printing costs are reduced significantly secondary to syllabi, handbooks, budgets, student applications, etc being posted on line or through an on line educational platform.